

MONTANA UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

Volume 18 • Issue 4 • April 2007

Living the Dream

Peter Pisciotta got to live every skier's dream this March. Pisciotta, his wife, and two other couples—all schoolteachers from Long Island, NY—had Showdown Mountain all to themselves on March 5th and 6th. This once-in-a-lifetime trip was part of Travel Montana's 2006-07 winter advertising campaign, "Win Your Own Montana Mountain."



Nestled in the Little Belt Mountains outside of Great Falls, Showdown was selected for its consistent powdery snowfalls, good vertical, varied terrain and a storied Montana history (it's Montana's oldest ski area, celebrating its 70th season).

The six skiers found themselves with personal mountain guides, the slopes all to themselves and two gorgeous sunny days. A personal chef was on site to prepare the group gourmet meals. Showdown's owners, George and Margie Willett, even surrendered their slopeside home to the group for their stay.

Whether sitting down to a pint with the ski patrol or gathering 'round for an



intimate night of entertainment with local singer/storyteller, Eric Gustafson (a schoolteacher from Conrad, MT), it was a quintessential Montana experience that kept our winners—all first time visitors to Montana—grinning ear to ear. "Unbelievable, unbelievable..." said an awestruck Peter in an on-mountain interview with local news crews. "I've never won anything like this in my life. It's awesome, it's incredible."

The unique promotion underscored what makes Montana skiing so special—uncrowded slopes, plentiful powder and the chance to kick back with locals like you've known them for years. The contest generated 22,800 entries from across the country.

Promoting Montana's Treasures

While the winter campaign wraps up, Travel Montana's warm season is about to hit full swing. New print and television creative debuted in 2006 with modifications made for the 2007 campaign.

This warm season, Travel Montana will continue to market its message to a national audience through magazine and internet media buys. This year's magazine plan expanded from the traditional 1/3 and full page ads to include more impactful and unique placement, including two-page spreads, consecutively placed ads to pique readers' interest and bookend placement surrounding articles. The internet plan puts less emphasis on traditional website banners and beefs up placement in opt-in newsletters and targeted HTML email blasts.

Travel Montana will continue its focus on regional and nearby key markets into the warm season. Radio, television and outdoor media placement will promote Montana and a Montana-themed treasure hunt in

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. Airport advertising will run in Seattle, WA. A full color, 12-page Montana newspaper insert will reach 750,000 households in key markets in Washington, Oregon, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming and Canada. A radio campaign will also support this regional effort.

Details are coming together for the Montana Treasure Trek, an in-state treasure hunt to be held in Montana from May 12th - July 14th and promoted through our regional newspaper and radio media buys. The event aims to encourage exploration of Montana's lesser known and off-the-beaten path treasures, with 18 caches, or weather-proof boxes, with prizes inside hidden across Montana. Although the event is a couple of months away, the promotion website will be up soon; get your sneak peek at www.MontanaHiddenTreasure.com.



MT Legislature Backs National Park Funding

Important economic anchors for the state's tourism industry, Montana's National Parks, battlefields and monuments are suffering from chronic budget woes. System-wide, the maintenance backlog is pegged at over \$5 billion and the annual operating shortfalls are \$800 million. Inadequate funding can translate into a poor quality visitor experience and 47% of Americans have said they would be unlikely to return to a National Park where visitor centers, roads, restrooms and campgrounds were in poor condition.

With support from Montana's tourism industry, gateway community leaders and the National Parks Conservation

Montana Department of Commerce, Promotion Division, Betsy Baumgart, Administrator
406-841-2870 • TDD 406-841-2702 • fax 406-841-2871 • web: visitmt.com
industry intranet: travelmontana.mt.gov

Association, State Senator Dan Weinberg of Whitefish has tackled the problem head on with Montana Legislature Senate Joint Resolution 3 (SJ3). This resolution, which earlier passed the State Senate by a 45 to 5 margin, urges Montana's Congressional Delegation to eliminate the backlog and adequately fund park operations by the Park Systems Centennial in 2016. You can view SJ3 at leg.mt.gov/css/default.asp.

SJ3 is now scheduled for a hearing before the Montana House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee on Tuesday April 3rd at 3pm (RM 153 of the Capitol).

Article submitted by Danielle Blank, Yellowstone Field Office, National Parks Conservation Association

New Texas Tradeshow for MFO



The Montana Film Office (MFO) recently attended the South by Southwest Film Festival and Trade Show in Austin, TX, March 9-14.

Montana had a booth at the trade show which draws close to 10,000 attendees with approximately half having ties to the film industry. The event emphasizes all aspects of the art and business of independent filmmaking. The event has gained international acclaim for the quality of its programming with a special focus on emerging talents who screen their projects next to cinematic greats whose work is regularly presented. The MFO garnered over 50 new contacts from the trade show and distributed hundreds of promotional incentive brochures, postcards and location presentations.

Grants Given to Seven Communities

Seven Montana communities have been selected to receive \$50,000 from the Montana Department of Commerce - Travel Montana's Special Events Grant Program (SEGP).

This program utilizes "bed tax" funds to assist in the promotion and implementation of tourism-related events.

The seven 2007 SEGP awards are:

- \$8,895: Polson, Polson Chamber of Commerce—Flathead Fest-of-All
- \$8,000: Hamilton, Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce—Bitterroot Birding & Nature Festival
- \$8,000: Great Falls, City of Great Falls—RiverFest

- \$7,500: Libby, Libby Chamber of Commerce—Kootenai River Rodeo
- \$7,500: Hardin, Hardin Chamber of Commerce—Northern Plains Indian Rodeo Finals
- \$6,455: Dillon, Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce—Senior Pro Rodeo
- \$3,650: Deer Lodge, Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation—MT Academy of Living History

The SEGP was developed in 2002 to assist communities with economic development through the creation and/or enhancement of new annual, on-going events. Grant funds are available for event marketing, equipment rental, insurance, performer fees, security and mailings. To date, the SEGP program has provided \$351,000 in tourism "bed tax" funds to 54 events in 37 Montana communities.

Deadline for the next round of grant applications will be mid-January 2008. For information, contact Travel Montana, 406-841-2870.

Don't Miss Out on the Winter Guide

If you have a business offering services or accommodations for Montana's winter visitor, Montana's Winter Guide has advertising opportunities for you! This four-color, glossy magazine features Montana's downhill and Nordic ski areas, snowmobiling, snowcoach tours, resorts, accommodations, guided services and transportation. Advertorial space is available in full, half and quarter page sizes, as well as 70-word directory listings. The deadline for reserving ad space is April 23, 2007. Guides will be available for distribution August 2007. For more information, contact Bev Clancey at 406-841-2898 or bclancey@mt.gov.

Rolling Closures to Missoula's Airport

This summer the Missoula International Airport will close one of its two runways in order to complete a major pavement reconstruction project. Beginning Monday, August 27, Runway 11-29, the primary arrival and departure runway, will experience a series of three rolling closures until construction is completed in September.

The airport is launching a multi-media campaign in an effort to keep the public informed and minimize inconvenience to travelers. Airport users are encouraged to monitor local newspapers and television media

for current information. For more information about the Airport's upcoming projects, visit them online at www.flymissoula.com or call 406-728-4381.

Missoula International Airport's Runway 11-29 will be closed to all aircraft operations on the following dates: Monday, Aug. 27 at 8 p.m. until 6 a.m. Friday, Aug. 31; Tuesday, Sept. 4 at 8 p.m. until 6 a.m. Friday, Sept. 7; Monday, Sept. 10 at 8 p.m. until 6 a.m. Friday, Sept. 14.

New Shuttle System for Glacier

Beginning in July 2007, visitors to Glacier National Park will have access to the new Appgar Transit Center (ATC). This transit and shuttle area, located approximately 1 mile from the west entrance, will provide two-way shuttle tours to 18 shuttle stops in Glacier, primarily along the Going-to-the-Sun Road (GTTS). These stops are along the Appgar, the Lake McDonald Valley and St. Mary Valley Routes, with transfers available at Logan Pass and the ATC. The ATC provides shuttle access, additional parking and public restrooms, as well as public information displays and self-service, interactive computer kiosks for trip-planning.

The shuttle system is being established to offer a travel option for visitors to avoid traffic and parking problems associated with rehabilitation of the GTTS and to offer an alternative to driving for park users. There is no additional charge or tickets required for the shuttle service, however park officials stress it is not an interpretive tour. For more information on the shuttle service, go to www.nps.gov/glac.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events:

April

- 2-3 Montana's Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation, Helena, MT
- 12-14 AFCI Locations Trade Show 2007, Santa Monica, CA
- 21-25 TIA Pow Wow Trade Show, Anaheim, CA
- 23 Deadline for Winter Guide advertising

May

- 1 Region/CVB FY08 Marketing Plans due

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:
travelmontana.mt.gov